Education Officer

Open competition for full-time and part-time posts

Information Sheet

May, 2006
Education Officer in the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

1. The Job

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment is the statutory body which advises the Minister for Education and Science on matters relating to the curriculum for early childhood education, primary and post-primary schools and the assessment procedures employed in schools and examinations on subjects which are part of the curriculum.

The Council wishes to make appointments, by way of secondment or contract, to the following posts of Education Officer:

**Full-time - Three Years (to 31 August, 2009)**

- Primary Education (2 Posts) – REF FT 1
- Inclusion (primary and post-primary) – REF FT 2

**Part-time - equivalent of one to two days per week**

- Assessment (Primary) – Ref PT 1
- Gaeilge (Post-primary) – Ref PT 2
- Modern Languages (Post-primary) – Ref PT 3
- Technology subjects (Post-primary) – Ref PT 4

The Education Officers will assist the executive in carrying out the brief of Council as defined in the Education Act, 1998, in relation to specific aspects of the review and reform of curriculum and assessment for early childhood, primary and post-primary education. The Education Officers will report to the Chief Executive or her nominee. In day-to-day operations they will report to a Deputy Chief Executive or Director, Curriculum and Assessment. They will also work with administrative staff and ancillary personnel as well as responding to queries and requests from members of the NCCA Council, the public and the media as they arise.

Education Officers will have regular and effective contact with staff of the Department of Education and Science particularly the Inspectorate, and with the education partners. They will be responsible for such contact with national and international networks, researchers and academics as may be required.
2. Essential Requirements

Candidates must: (on the latest date for receipt of completed applications)

- hold a recognised degree or equivalent professional or teaching qualification
- have a comprehensive knowledge of the Irish education system, of current curriculum and assessment issues, and particular expertise in the area specified
- have excellent communication skills and the ability to write to a very high standard
- have ICT skills.

3. Responsibilities

The Education Officer shall: -

- assist the NCCA executive in carrying out its brief in relation to the review and reform of school curriculum and its assessment with particular responsibility for the specified area of the curriculum under development
- service the work of such course or curriculum committees to which the Education Officer may be assigned, in fulfilment of their terms of reference, including the production of a record of the proceedings of each meeting of the committee(s) and ensuring that appropriate action is taken to further the work of the committee
- service the work of such other relevant enabling structures as the Council may put in place
- prepare working papers, discussion documents, draft reports and other such documentation in relation to curriculum and assessment matters
- assist in dissemination of information on curriculum and assessment at all levels of the education system
- attend and/or address meetings of Council at the direction of the Chief Executive or her nominee or meet with other groups and individuals on behalf of Council
- communicate effectively within the NCCA, and on its behalf
- carry out further related work at the request of the Chief Executive or her nominee.
4. Particular Responsibilities

In addition to the above, the following particular responsibilities apply to the posts.

Full-time Posts

Primary Education – REF FT 1 (2 posts)

The persons appointed to these posts will be responsible for one or more of the following areas of work in Early Childhood Education, the Primary Curriculum Review and Gaeilge -

- **Early Childhood Education**
  - organising and presenting children’s early learning and development through themes
  - developing guidelines for practitioners\(^1\) on planning for and assessing children’s learning and development, and using reflective practice as a tool for quality improvement
  - developing guidelines for practitioners on adult-child interactions and practitioner-parent partnerships
  - contributing to the development of background papers on aspects of early childhood education.

- **Primary Curriculum Review**
  - designing and developing review and reflection materials on specific subjects for teachers
  - designing and developing tools and processes for gathering data from schools on their experiences in implementing the Primary School Curriculum
  - working with schools in gathering the data
  - analysing the data and identifying implications for the NCCA’s ongoing work in supporting schools in implementing the curriculum
  - responding to the needs of schools as highlighted in the data.

\(^1\) The NCCA uses the term *practitioner* to refer to all those who work with children in a specialised manner in early childhood settings. This includes infant teachers and practitioners in the range of settings outside the primary school.
• **Gaeilge**
  - preparing guidelines on language and literacy in Irish medium schools
  - supporting the work in Primary Curriculum Review with particular reference to Gaeilge
  - supporting language work for early childhood and primary education.

In fulfilling these duties, the Education Officers will draw on the following expertise and skills.

- knowledge of the Irish early childhood and/or primary education system, of current curriculum and assessment issues, and particular expertise relevant to the tasks specified
- experience in working with children in early childhood and/or primary education.
- proficiency in the use of ICT
- research skills including data gathering and recording, analysing, summarising, report writing and presenting to a wide range of audiences.

**Inclusion (primary and post-primary) – REF FT 3**

The work of the NCCA places a particular emphasis on the contribution developments in curriculum and assessment can make to greater inclusion in the education system. In recent years work in the areas of special educational needs, educational disadvantage and intercultural education have reflected this emphasis. The person appointed to this position will be responsible for undertaking those aspects of the NCCA’s Plan of Work related to inclusive education.

The person appointed to this post will be responsible for:

- developments related to the area of special educational needs including provision and review of curriculum guidelines for primary and post-primary schools
- developments related to the area of educational disadvantage including curriculum review (primary and post-primary) addressing issues of access to and participation in the curriculum
- developments related to the area of intercultural education and its support in school organisation, teaching and learning
- liaising with NCCA networks of schools in these contexts
- participating in the NCCA teams directing work in these areas.
In fulfilling these duties, the Education Officer will draw on the following expertise and skills:

- Knowledge of the Irish education system, with particular reference to curriculum and assessment developments in primary and post-primary education
- A recognised qualification or particular expertise in the area of special educational needs
- Specific knowledge and experience of working in the areas of equality in education, special educational needs and/or educational disadvantage
- The ability to plan, implement, manage and monitor the progress of developmental work in the area of curriculum and assessment
- Proficiency in the use of ICT
- Skills in the area of curriculum and assessment development and in the areas of analysing, summarising, report writing and presenting to a wide range of audiences.

**Part-time Posts**

**Assessment (Primary) – Ref PT 1**

The person appointed to this post will contribute to:

- Developing draft Report Card Templates for use in primary schools
- Working with schools to gather data on their experiences in using the draft templates
- Developing guidelines on assessment for primary teachers.

In fulfilling these duties, the Education Officer will draw on the following expertise and skills:

- Knowledge of the Irish primary education system, of current curriculum and assessment issues, and particular expertise relevant to the tasks specified
- Research skills including data gathering and recording, analysing, summarising and report writing
- Presenting to a wide range of audiences.
Gaeilge (Post-primary) – Ref PT 2

Modern Languages (Post-primary) – Ref PT3

Technology subjects (Post-primary) – Ref PT4

The purpose of the competition is to establish a panel of potential Education Officers for the subjects in question. These are the languages Gaeilge, French, German, Spanish and Italian and the four technology subjects. A number of appointments from the panel will be made from the school year 2006-2007.

The persons appointed to these will work on developments in the relevant subjects in the context both of the ongoing Junior Cycle Review and/or the Senior Cycle Developments. Typically, the work will involve working with the NCCA and its sub-committees to review and revise syllabuses and assessment arrangements and to generate subject guidelines and exemplification of teaching and learning.

In fulfilling these duties and in addition to the general responsibilities outlined above, Education Officers will draw on the following expertise and skills

- knowledge of the Irish education system, with particular reference to post-primary education
- specific knowledge of the junior and senior cycle developments and of the curricula of the subject/s in question
- the ability to plan, undertake and monitor the progress of developmental work in the area of curriculum and assessment
- proficiency in the use of ICT.

5. Remuneration and Expenses

Full-time posts

The Education Officer salary scale is as follows:

€50,867 X 8 - €75,363
€53,546 X 8 - €79,334 (Personal Pension Contribution Scale)

Travel, subsistence and other costs incurred by Education Officers in the course of their official work may be recouped from the Council in accordance with public service rates and procedures.
Part-time posts

Education Officers appointed on a secondment basis will continue to be paid their salary and allowances by their parent employer. Salary or substitution costs will be recouped to the relevant management authority by the NCCA. In addition a special allowance of €57.62 per day will be paid to the Education Officer by the NCCA. Those appointed on a contract basis will be paid €219.20 per day.

6. Location

The NCCA is currently based at 24 Merrion Square, Dublin 2. The Council has a policy of facilitating atypical working arrangements which include part-working from alternative suitable accommodation to be agreed by the Chief Executive. The NCCA is scheduled to move to Portarlington, Co. Laois under the Government’s decentralisation programme.

7. Format of the Competition

NCCA reserves the right to shortlist applicants.

Selection will be on the basis of a competitive interview. The interview will be based on the competencies required to carry out the duties and responsibilities as set out in the requirements for the posts.

Prior to the main interview, candidates will be set a 20-minute task which will require them to offer a written analysis of a policy issue broadly relevant to the work of the NCCA. This short written report will be made available to the board to assist them in making a decision on the application. A PC will be available for this task.

It is expected that the interviews for the posts will take place early in early June, 2006.

8. Completing the Application Form

Applications must be made on the official application form.

When completing the application form accuracy is essential.

In order to expedite the holding of the competition, the NCCA would be grateful if candidates would forward the original completed application form plus five copies when applying for the post.
9. Closing Date

The completed application form must be forwarded so as to reach Ms Jackie O’Brien (jackie.obrien@ncca.ie), Executive Officer, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 24 Merrion Square, Dublin 2 not later than 5 p.m. on Wednesday 31st May, 2006. An application form sent by post should be posted in sufficient time to ensure delivery by this deadline. Appeals related to loss or delay will not be considered unless supported by a certificate of posting. The cost of postage must be borne by the applicant. All application forms are acknowledged. Change of address should be notified to us immediately in writing.

10. Confidentiality

Subject to the provisions of the F.O.I. Act, 1997 applications will be treated in strict confidence.

11. General Information

The onus is on all applicants to make themselves available for the interview on the date(s) specified by the NCCA and to make whatever arrangements are necessary to ensure that they receive communications sent to them at the address specified on their application form. The NCCA will not be responsible for expenses incurred by candidates.

12. Deeming of Candidature to be withdrawn

Candidates who-

(a) do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as the NCCA requires in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature; or

(b) do not attend the obligatory test(s) at the time(s) and place(s) appointed, or

(c) when offered appointment do not accept appointment and take up duty as arranged;

shall, unless the NCCA in their absolute discretion decide otherwise, be deemed to have withdrawn their candidature.